

Abstract of the Disclosure

The invention relates to mixtures of mono-, di-, and tri-esters of hydroxycarboxylic acids and to a process for producing them. The hydroxycarboxylic acid is preferably citric acid. In the disclosed process, hydroxycarboxylic acids or salts thereof are reacted with a mixture of alcohols corresponding to general formulae (I) R^1-OH and (II) $R^2-(C_2H_4)_n-OH$, where R^1 and R^2 independently of one another represent a saturated or unsaturated, branched or unbranched C_{6-22} alkyl group and n is a number of 1 to 20, at temperatures of 120 to 180°C, wherein the compounds of formulae (I) and (II) are used in a ratio by weight of 10:1 to 1:10, and preferably in a ratio of 10:1 to 1:1.